Newly Opened Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Center at RU-N
by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

In February, Rutgers University–Newark (RU-N) officially opened its Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center. TRHT Campus Center is a comprehensive, national, and community-based initiative developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and funded by Newman’s Own Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to foster transformational and sustainable change that addresses the adverse effects of racism.

In collaboration with community partners, RU-N’s TRHT Campus Center seeks to:
• increase positive engagement and perceptions of Newark and its surrounding communities;
• facilitate ongoing on- and off-campus conversations concerning issues of truth and racial healing;
• leverage RU-N resources to facilitate a reduction in poverty and unemployment in Newark and strengthen Newark’s economy by 2020; and
• change legislative policies regarding voting rights of individuals in the criminal justice system.

Initially, RU-N’s TRHT Campus Center will fulfill its mission through a series of activities featured throughout Newark titled, “My Racial Healing Looks Like.” Events to date have included:
• A wine and cheese launch reception that included a tour and discussion of Mirror Mirror, an exhibition of contemporary visual art that utilizes the concept of portraiture to challenge dominant paradigms about gender, race, age, societal norms, technology, and beauty.
• A musical performance and fictional discussion with four of the most renowned women in blues and jazz history – Billie Holiday, Josephine Baker, Bessie Smith, and Ethel Waters; starring Patricia Walton as Billie Holiday, Phyllis Blandford as Josephine Baker, Omisanya Karade as Ethel Waters, and Ife Basim as Bessie Smith.
• A Women’s History Month celebration of NASA aerospace engineer Aprille Joy Ericsson, Jet Express Airlines First Officer Carole Hopson, and other “hidden figures” — women whose accomplishments and achievements have impacted the lives of others, but who remain unrecognized.

Continued on page 6
Hail to the Class of 2018!

by Desiree Bascomb

On Monday, May 14, graduates and community members of Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) will gather in Newark’s Prudential Center for the 2018 commencement ceremony. Rapper, actress, and Newark native, Queen Latifah, will be this year’s distinguished speaker and recipient of an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree. Latifah is a Grammy Award winner, songwriter, rapper, producer, and hip-hop trailblazer. Her authentic and socially conscious rap style has inspired generations worldwide. A feminist icon who pioneered a path for women in a traditionally male-dominated industry, Latifah personifies resilience and dedication. Also recognized for her humanitarianism and philanthropy, in 2013, Latifah received the Newark Beth Israel Medical Center Community Award for the contributions of her family-run nonprofit organization, the Lancelot H. Owens Scholarship Foundation, established in honor of Latifah’s older sibling who tragically died during a motorcycle accident in 1992.

Latifah began her career in the entertainment industry in 1988 and remains one of the most influential names in hip hop. Latifah’s music reflects themes such as female empowerment, gender equality, and systemic racism. Her passion for social justice has always been represented through her art. She has starred in more than 48 films and charmed audiences on the silver screen for more than 25 years. For her incomparable artistry, Latifah has received numerous awards and accolades. As an entrepreneur and mogul, Latifah’s work ethic, persistence, and humility represent the values of RU-N.

In addition to commencement on May 14, the graduate hooding ceremony will take place Thursday, May 10, at the Paul Robeson Campus Center at 3 p.m. Charles Payne, director of the Joseph C. Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies at Rutgers-Newark, will be the keynote speaker. The Rutgers Business School graduate convocation will be held on Friday, May 18, at 2 p.m. at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC). Gary Cohen, executive vice president of global health and president of the BD Foundation at BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), a global medical technology company, will address the graduating class. The Rutgers Law School convocation will be Friday, May 25, at 10 a.m. at NJPAC. Gurbir S. Grewal, the 61st attorney general for the state of New Jersey, will be the speaker.

This year’s Class of 2018 includes 2,440 undergraduate students and 935 graduate students.

SCHOLARSHIP

Is There Discrimination When Minority Small Business Owners Apply for Loans?

by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

With the support of a $1.2 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the scope of a pilot study titled “Shaping Small Business Lending Policy through Matched-Paired Mystery Shopping” has been expanded from two cities to five. Originally commissioned in 2017 by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, the study examines the potential vulnerabilities of African-American entrepreneurs to exploitation in the small-business lending marketplace where few policy protections exist for them.

Co-authored by Rutgers University-Newark Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Jerome Williams and scholars from Utah State University, Brigham Young University, and Lubin Research LLC, the pilot study revealed that minority-owned businesses seeking small business loans are treated differently than their white counterparts, despite having identical qualifications on paper. Specifically, the report detailed the following discriminatory practices:

1. African-American entrepreneurs were asked to provide more information about business and personal finances than white business owners. Moreover, the African-American entrepreneurs experienced micro-aggressions along with the disparate treatment they received. Some banks checked to verify the business status and standing of only African Americans. One banker asked the African-American applicant why he was in the bank’s area that day but did not pose the same question to his white counterpart; both applicants had disclosed that their businesses were an hour away from the bank. Another bank suggested the African-American applicant go to the bank’s branch located closer to his business but did not make the same recommendation to the white applicant.

“Our research shows that there is a critical need for a reliable source of primary data on which regulatory agencies can depend as they work to implement effective protections that ensure equal access to credit within the small-business lending marketplace,” notes Williams, who is also Distinguished Professor and Presidential Chair in Business at the Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick.

Along with providing funding for ongoing investigations of small business lending practices of banks in three additional cities, the three-year grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation will be used to educate both banks and borrowers about discrimination in the financial marketplace.
Erica Williams, dean of students

by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

“I’m committed to ensuring that all 12,000 students here at Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) have a positive experience,” smiles Erica Williams, the recently promoted dean of students.

As the dean of students, Williams is charged with providing services that enhance the student experience outside the classroom. To that end, she oversees RU-N’s Office of Student Life and Leadership, Office of Community Standards and Student Development, Office of Veterans Affairs, LGBTQ and Intercultural Resource Center, Undocumented Student Services, and Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team.

Williams joined RU-N in 2016 as assistant dean of student life and immediately began making her mark. Working with Dr. Sofia Pinto-Figueroa, she designed and implemented Student Orientation, Advisement, and Registration (SOAR) Day, a one-day program devised to welcome all new students regardless of school. During SOAR Day, students have the opportunity to meet new friends across all disciplines, learn about campus resources, and register for fall courses with the assistance of an academic advisor.

“Before SOAR Day, student orientations were decentralized,” remarked Williams. “SOAR Day is efficient, ensures everyone receives consistent information, and unifies incoming classes.”

Also during her first two years at RU-N, Williams promoted Charnette Hockaday to serve as the first assistant dean and director of the Office of Community Standards and Student Development. Moreover, as chair of the search committee for the first case manager for Undocumented Student Services, Williams helped to hire Yuriana Garcia Tellez in January 2018.

Prospectively, Williams aspires to create an infrastructure where all students are a part of the CARE Team. The CARE Team develops a support plan to help students cope effectively with personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Presently, the program adopts a referral-based model. Williams would like to expand the reach so all students are aware of the CARE Team, and support can be provided proactively.

Williams also wants to consolidate RU-N’s student leadership development programs. She has her sights set on a common leadership curriculum.

Away from RU-N — well, there’s no such thing for Williams. The Detroit native lives in Newark and frequently returns to campus for weekend and evening events. She also avails herself of all things Newark whenever possible, and especially enjoys the tai chi and yoga classes in Military Park.

Williams received her master’s degree from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and her bachelor’s degree from DePaul University in Chicago. She currently is a candidate for a doctoral degree in adult learning and leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Nick Kline, founder and director of Shine Portrait Studio

by Ferlanda Fox Nixon

Although born in Spring Lake, New Jersey, and a graduate of Sparta High School in Sparta, New Jersey, for most of his life, Nick Kline has identified as a Philadelphian, the nexus of his family working-class roots. While he also has staked claims in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and Manhattan, he now proudly calls Newark, New Jersey, home.

“I live in a quiet apartment in the Hahne’s building,” he shared, “which allows for seamless immersion in my project.”

Kline’s project, a collaboratively based, socially engaged artwork, is the Shine Portrait Studio on the third floor of Express Newark in the renovated Hahne’s building.

After joining the Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) faculty in 2001, Kline became aware of how challenging yet also rewarding assignments based in portraiture were for his photography students. A 2007 proposal for a storefront portrait studio grew out of this pedagogical experience, and the dream came to fruition in early 2017 with the opening of Shine. The studio was co-built with local photographers and entrepreneurs with the aspiration of a shared studio space accessible to all. As the founder and director of the Shine Portrait Studio, and with support from studio supervisor Anthony Alvarez and assistant managers Shelley Edelman and Deycu Nunez, Kline creates a welcoming environment.

“Anyone can schedule studio time,” notes Kline. “There is no application or screening process.”

Moreover, access to Shine (including its professional equipment and technical support) is free. Multifaceted, the studio also serves as an active classroom for RU-N photography students, offers Saturday programming for Newark high school students, and has a residency program for artists and curators who work exclusively on community-engaged projects.

Kline extends an open invitation to the RU-N community to stop by the Shine Portrait Studio regularly to view the art on display. While guiding Shine consumes a great deal of Kline’s time, he still manages to devote his off hours to other endeavors. When he’s not bonding with his teenage son, he’s attending art exhibitions, exercising, hiking, or traveling.

Kline received his bachelor of fine art in photography degree from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He earned a master of fine art in photography degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Explore the Shine Portrait Studio at www.shineportrait.com or scan this QR code:
ON THE PLAZA

Appointments

In February, Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) announced John Kuo Wei (Jack) Tchen and Salamishah Tillet as the new co-leaders of the Clement A. Price Institute on Ethnicity, Culture and the Modern Experience (Price Institute). In addition to serving as the new director of the Price Institute, Tchen is the inaugural Clement A. Price Chair in Public History and the Humanities. He comes to RU-N from New York University where he specialized in American and Asian American history. Tchen received his doctoral and bachelor’s degrees from the University of Wisconsin and his master’s degree from New York University.

Tillet, a leading thinker on the relationship between art and social justice, is the new associate director of the Price Institute. Tillet also is the founding director of the Public Arts and Social Justice Initiative at Express Newark and a faculty member in RU-N’s MFA in Creative Writing Program. Prior to joining RU-N, she taught English and Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Tillet earned her doctoral degree from Harvard University, master’s degrees from Harvard University and Brown University, and a bachelor’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Charles M. Payne is the Henry Rutgers Distinguished Professor of African American Studies at Rutgers University-Newark and the new director of the Joseph C. Cornell Center for Metropolitan Research. His research and teaching interests include urban education and school reform, social inequality, social change, and modern African American history, particularly the Black Freedom Struggle. His books include So Much Reform, So Little Change (Harvard Education Publishing Group, 2008) and a co-edited anthology Teach Freedom: The African American Tradition of Education For Liberation (Teachers College Press, 2008).

Payne has taught at Southern University, Williams College, Haverford College, Northwestern University, Duke University, and the University of Chicago, and is the recipient of several teaching awards. Payne holds a bachelor’s degree in Afro-American studies from San Francisco State and a doctoral degree in sociology from Northwestern University.

Payne outlines the future direction of the Cornwall Center and the overall mission in a recent video interview. To watch, visit the Rutgers-Newark YouTube page or scan this QR code:

Promising future in a daylong event titled "MSP 50 Celebration: Coming Together and Looking Ahead" Activities included a tour of the campus, an afternoon colloquium, and an evening of dinner and dancing. The colloquium took place at 15 Washington Street, evoking nostalgia for many since it was the former law school building from 1979-1999. The evening festivities were held at the Robert Treat Hotel. The event raised nearly $1 million for 12 summer public interest fellowships.

MSP was founded to boost enrollment of students from historically underrepresented groups to increase legal representation of disadvantaged individuals living in communities of unrest. For five decades, MSP has provided its students with academic and professional resources designed to enhance their law school experience, create internship and employment opportunities, and establish relationships with alumni. As a result of the program’s success, there now are 2,500 alumni who have diversified the legal profession in New Jersey and beyond. Some have esteemed careers as partners in law firms, general counsels of corporate law departments, professors and deans of law schools, officials at all levels and in all branches of government, including the judiciary, and leaders of nongovernmental organizations. Feedback gathered throughout this anniversary year will inform discussion and ideas to elevate further MSP’s critical role in advancing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

CUEED Turns 10!

by Lyneir Richardson

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of the Rutgers University Center for Urban Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CUEED). CUEED is the first center of its kind in the nation to integrate scholarship with private industry, government, and nonprofit sectors to stimulate entrepreneurial and economic growth in urban environments. CUEED’s mission is to build a world-class, research-driven, teaching, and practitioner-oriented urban entrepreneurship and economic development program that transforms Newark and other cities worldwide.

During this milestone year, CUEED will be telling the stories of successful and emerging urban entrepreneurs and the ways in which they have used their success to improve lives and expand opportunities in urban communities. CUEED will put a face on urban entrepreneurship by launching a monthly series of “TED-style Talks” or “Fireside Chats” by dynamic business minds designed to impart the critical insights needed to bolster small businesses and spark community revitalization.

Other activities include a crowd funding campaign in April, which will give Rutgers students and alumni an opportunity to provide financial support to local community and youth entrepreneurship programs. In June, CUEED will induct its first class into the CUEED Council of Urban Entrepreneurs. The 10 inductees will represent Newark’s revered and often unrecognized business and community leaders. Finally, CUEED will culminate the year with a gala held in November during the annual celebration of Global Entrepreneurship Week.

Groundbreaking Law School Program Turns 50!

On Saturday, April 14, 2018, approximately 700 members of the Rutgers Law School community (students, alumni, and faculty from Newark and Camden alike) gathered to salute the Minority Student Program’s (MSP) storied 50-year history and}\n
Rutgers Day 2018

On Saturday, April 28, Rutgers University-Newark rolled out the scarlet carpet. From 10am-4pm on the Norman Samuels Plaza, approximately 4,000 people gathered to enjoy Rutgers Day, a free, family-friendly annual event that showcases the many offerings at Rutgers University-Newark. Open to the general public, Rutgers Day gives attendees the opportunity to become familiar with the research, innovation, and civic engagement happening in and around campus. As in past years, there were hands-on learning activities, performances, exhibits, demonstrations, giveaways, and other interactive activities for people of all ages.

New this year in conjunction with Rutgers Day, Culture Con made its debut at Express Newark in the Hahne’s building. The event featured traditional comic con staples, including cosplay, vendors, and panel discussions, but with an emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and representation in the arts, especially in the comic book/fantasy industry.

The excitement didn’t end there. Alumni Weekend coincided with Rutgers Day. Consequently, many Rutgers-Newark alumni returned to be a part of the festivities and participate in the alumni pinning ceremony.

Additional Rutgers Day events occurred simultaneously at Rutgers-New Brunswick and Rutgers-Camden. For highlights of the day’s events on each campus, visit www.rutgersday.rutgers.edu or scan this QR code:

Photo: Shanida Carter

Photo: Paul Goldfinger

Photo: Paul Goldfinger

QR code: or scan this QR code:

Additional Rutgers Day events occurred simultaneously at Rutgers-New Brunswick and Rutgers-Camden. For highlights of the day’s events on each campus, visit www.rutgersday.rutgers.edu or scan this QR code:

Photo: Shanida Carter

Photo: Paul Goldfinger

Photo: Paul Goldfinger

QR code: or scan this QR code:

On Saturday, April 14, 2018, approximately 700 members of the Rutgers Law School community (students, alumni, and faculty from Newark and Camden alike) gathered to salute the Minority Student Program’s (MSP) storied 50-year history and promising future in a daylong event titled "MSP 50 Celebration: Coming Together and Looking Ahead" Activities included a tour of the campus, an afternoon colloquium, and an evening of dinner and dancing. The colloquium took place at 15 Washington Street, evoking nostalgia for many since it was the former law school building from 1979-1999. The evening festivities were held at the Robert Treat Hotel. The event raised nearly $1 million for 12 summer public interest fellowships.

MSP was founded to boost enrollment of students from historically underrepresented groups to increase legal representation of disadvantaged individuals living in communities of unrest. For five decades, MSP has provided its students with academic and professional resources designed to enhance their law school experience, create internship and employment opportunities, and establish relationships with alumni. As a result of the program’s success, there now are 2,500 alumni who have diversified the legal profession in New Jersey and beyond. Some have esteemed careers as partners in law firms, general counsels of corporate law departments, professors and deans of law schools, officials at all levels and in all branches of government, including the judiciary, and leaders of nongovernmental organizations. Feedback gathered throughout this anniversary year will inform discussion and ideas to elevate further MSP’s critical role in advancing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

Groundbreaking Law School Program Turns 50!

On Saturday, April 14, 2018, approximately 700 members of the Rutgers Law School community (students, alumni, and faculty from Newark and Camden alike) gathered to salute the Minority Student Program’s (MSP) storied 50-year history and promising future in a daylong event titled "MSP 50 Celebration: Coming Together and Looking Ahead" Activities included a tour of the campus, an afternoon colloquium, and an evening of dinner and dancing. The colloquium took place at 15 Washington Street, evoking nostalgia for many since it was the former law school building from 1979-1999. The evening festivities were held at the Robert Treat Hotel. The event raised nearly $1 million for 12 summer public interest fellowships.

MSP was founded to boost enrollment of students from historically underrepresented groups to increase legal representation of disadvantaged individuals living in communities of unrest. For five decades, MSP has provided its students with academic and professional resources designed to enhance their law school experience, create internship and employment opportunities, and establish relationships with alumni. As a result of the program’s success, there now are 2,500 alumni who have diversified the legal profession in New Jersey and beyond. Some have esteemed careers as partners in law firms, general counsels of corporate law departments, professors and deans of law schools, officials at all levels and in all branches of government, including the judiciary, and leaders of nongovernmental organizations. Feedback gathered throughout this anniversary year will inform discussion and ideas to elevate further MSP’s critical role in advancing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

Groundbreaking Law School Program Turns 50!

On Saturday, April 14, 2018, approximately 700 members of the Rutgers Law School community (students, alumni, and faculty from Newark and Camden alike) gathered to salute the Minority Student Program’s (MSP) storied 50-year history and
Congratulations, CLASS OF 2018!

By Desiree Bascomb

Thousands of extraordinary students are graduating from Rutgers University–Newark this year. Here’s an introduction to a few of them.

__Lizbeth Marinez__
School of Criminal Justice

Lizbeth Marinez was introduced to the criminal justice system at an early age when a close family member was sentenced to time in a federal penitentiary. Through her experience, she witnessed the stigma many individuals experience upon re-entry from prison and knew she had to help change the narrative. Marinez is passionate about criminal justice reform and specifically focuses her efforts on the rights of women and children. She stresses the importance of education and prevention and believes in post-incarceration programs that encourage job-training, résumé building, and other rehabilitation techniques. Currently enrolled in a five-year program at the School of Criminal Justice, Marinez will receive her bachelor’s degree this spring and her master’s degree in the fall. An advocate of criminal justice education, she regularly visits her hometown of Passaic to talk to middle and high school students on relevant criminal justice issues.

“Many communities have not been educated on the ins and outs of the criminal justice system. Consequently, they often find themselves learning the processes when it’s too much too late. I believe it is critical to educate children to help them avoid situations that may have lasting repercussions.”

__Ajani Compton__
School of Public Affairs and Administration

With an interest in technology and an impending degree in public and nonprofit administration, graduating senior Ajani Compton has big plans. Realizing he lacked strong leadership skills, after earning his associate’s degree from Bergen Community College, Compton chose to attend Rutgers-Newark’s School of Public Affairs and Administration to help him reach his ambitious goals. Currently enrolled in a five-year program, Compton will receive his bachelor’s degree this spring and a master’s degree next year. During the summer of 2017, Compton interned in the Office of the Mayor of the City of Newark. Through this experience, he gained a better sense of professional direction. Compton plans to merge his love for technology with his background in public and nonprofit administration. He believes the curation of “big data” will help politicians better understand their constituents and the needs of their communities.

“With increased use of technology, it is important for public servants to be involved in tech because it is one of the most useful, efficient, and effective ways to connect with the public. This ultimately will help leaders make impactful changes in the lives of the people they serve.”

__Sheila Zegarra__
Rutgers Business School

At a young age, Sheila Zegarra questioned everything and never took “no” for an answer. She continually uses her passion and drive as motivation to be her very best in all aspects of her life. As a result of her hard work and excellent academic standing, Zegarra was able to take college courses as a high school senior. She always had an entrepreneurial spirit, and through her exposure to college business courses, realized her aptitude for management and leadership. Unsurprisingly, in May she will be graduating from Rutgers Business School with a bachelor’s degree in business management and global business. In her short time at Rutgers-Newark, the Union County College alumna founded the Association of International Relations. The organization educates its members on issues of diversity and cultural differences and has planned many charitable activities including assembling hygiene kits for the Salvation Army and organizing a toy drive for refugee children.

“I love when we can celebrate culture. But what I love more than anything is when we can learn about other cultures. The point of my organization is to provide a platform that allows people the opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of others.”

__Luke Barlow__
Rutgers Law School

Luke Barlow, officially completed his law school studies in January but will ceremoniously receive his juris doctor from Rutgers Law School in May. While holding a job at Prudential, Barlow attended law school part-time and managed to graduate in just three and a half years. With a successful finance career and undergraduate degree in finance from Penn State, in 2013, Barlow decided he wanted a career change. He had always been fascinated with law, as he had minored in business law. He appreciated Rutgers Law School’s flexible schedule, which enabled him to work full-time and attend law school at his own pace.

Barlow will begin a clerkship with the New Jersey Superior Court, Appellate Division, in August. He hopes to use his professional background to pursue a career in real estate law or securities law at a New Jersey law firm. Despite the many challenges a long hiatus from school might bring, “it is never too late” to go back, according to Barlow. “With focus and discipline, anything is possible.”

__Eleanor Ratner__
Newark College of Arts and Sciences

What Eleanor Ratner loves most about Rutgers-Newark is its diversity. In an environment much different from her hometown of River Edge, New Jersey, Ratner has met men and women from many backgrounds during her college career. The honors college student is a psychology major on a premedical track and aspires to become a doctor or pediatric psychology or neuroscience.

“As a doctor, I will be working with many different people. Rutgers-Newark has opened my eyes to diversity and helped me appreciate cultural differences. Through food, music, and traditions, variety in humans is beautiful and cannot be learned from reading a book. I am happy I got such a well-rounded education that will help me professionally.”

Ratner is a resident assistant and enjoys interacting with students and members of the Rutgers-Newark community. She also is a peer educator who uses her influence to educate students on issues of social justice and equality.

__Israel C. Nnah__
Graduate School–Newark

Born in Nigeria, Israel C. Nnah came to the United States at the age of 13. Fascinated by biology, Nnah earned his doctoral degree in cellular and molecular biology from Rutgers University–Newark in February and currently is a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard University. Throughout his educational journey, Nnah has received numerous prestigious awards and recognition for his academic excellence. In 2017, he received the Graduate Student Scholarship award from Rutgers University, and from 2012–2015, he was named a Minority Biomedical Research Support Fellow at Rutgers University–Newark. As for his career aspirations, Nnah shared, “Following my postdoctoral training, I plan to seek a career in academia to further extend my expertise in cellular neuroscience, commitment to hard work and high quality.”

---

**OUR STUDENTS pg. 5**
Rutgers-Newark and Mexican Consulate Sign Memorandum of Understanding
by Shania Carter

Scholarship funding and a range of support programs are now available to Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) students of Mexican origin and descent, thanks to a new agreement between RU-N and the Consulate of Mexico. RU-N Chancellor Nancy Cantor and the Consul General of Mexico, Ambassador Diego Gómez Pickering, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on February 8, 2018, which improves coordination to help benefit the region’s Mexican and Mexican-American community.

The initiative provides financial support to RU-N students via the IME-Becas Scholarship Program. Those students also receive cohort-based academic support. The MOU also creates internship opportunities through community-based organizations working in Mexican communities in New Jersey, helps disseminate higher education information to New Jersey’s Mexican communities, expands recruitment materials available in Spanish, and collaborates to keep the Mexican community informed on pressing immigration issues.

As Ambassador Pickering pointed out at the signing, the Mexican community is the fastest growing community in New Jersey. To address that growing population, other future endeavors that will be made possible by the MOU include a “Consulate on Wheels,” which would provide space for the Mexican Consular staff to meet with members of New Jersey’s Mexican community, in addition to academic exchanges and cooperative research with Mexican universities.

“We see an enormous bonus for the world in really opening up these pathways. We are entirely connected to communities near and far,” remarked Chancellor Cantor. She added, “The state of New Jersey is so wonderfully full of different cultural heritages and communities, and that’s what we really pride ourselves on.”

MTW 2018: Music’s Role in Black History
by Shania Carter

Hundreds from the Newark community gathered for the 38th Annual Marion Thompson Wright (MTW) Lecture Series, an annual public event at Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) during Black History Month. This year’s lecture weaved together the academic and the artistic to explore the social roles of music in black history. This marquee event is hosted annually by RU-N’s Clement A. Price Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience.

‘Artists’ role is to reveal and tell our story,’ according to keynote speaker Stefan Harris. The Grammy-nominated jazz vibraphonist delivered the opening lecture of this year’s theme: “The Space between the Notes: The Social Life of Music in Black History.” The musician and scholar opened his presentation with musical improvisation by his band. A highlight of his lecture was the verbal and musical description of the roots of jazz and the blues formed by the black experience in colonial America. “The enslaved had to use their voices to secretly express their authentic selves,” Harris remarked. “The space between the notes is where the blues was born.” He also mentioned the importance of Newark as an integral component in music history and further explained that the Harlem Renaissance was really a dual-city movement of Harlem and Newark. Farrah Jasmine Griffin, Daphne Brooks, and Alexis Jessica Morrast also performed and delved into the history and current state of music in the black diaspora.

To close out the day, MTW attendees were treated to a reception at the Newark Museum, featuring a jazz performance by the Bradford Hayes Trio. According to Mayor Ras Baraka, who brought greetings on behalf of the City of Newark, “Newark is moving forward because of arts, music, and culture.”

For highlights from MTW 2018, visit https://www.youtube.com/user/InstOnEthnicity or scan this QR code:

Newly Opened Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Center at RU-N … from cover

RU-N’s TRHT Campus Center is co-directed by Sharon Stroye, director of community engagement at the School of Public Affairs and Administration; Yoldey Rosario, director of the LGBTQ and Intercultural Resource Center; and Kaleena Berryman, acting director of the Abbott Leadership Institute. The center’s core leadership is supported by senior Rutgers-Newark faculty and administrators: Sherri-Ann P. Butterfield, executive vice chancellor and associate professor of sociology; Timothy K. Eatman, dean of the Honors Living-Learning Community and associate professor of urban education; Diane Hill, assistant chancellor of the Office of University-Community Partnerships; Bonita Veysey, vice chancellor for planning and implementation, inaugural director of the P3 Collaboratory for Pedagogy, Professional Development and Publicly-engaged Scholarship, and a professor criminal justice.

Individuals or organizations interested in getting involved with RU-N’s TRHT Campus Center should contact Stroye at shockada@rutgers.edu, 973-353-3019; Rosario at yoldey.rosario@rutgers.edu, 973-353-2796; or Berryman at kaleenab@rutgers.edu, 973-353-3520

KEEP CONNECTED

Connect is published by the Office of Communications. Your comments are welcomed. Ferlanda Fox Nixon, Senior Editor ferlandafoxnixon@rutgers.edu
Shanida Carter, Editor shanida.carter@rutgers.edu
Derwin Rainforth, Editor drainforth@rutgers.edu
Ronald Scott, Photo Editor ronaldscott@rutgers.edu
249 University Ave., Newark, NJ 07102
Phone 973-353-5262 Fax 973-353-1050
For current and back issues, and article search, visit www.newark.rutgers.edu/connect
Design & Layout: Bambang Wibowo